



ARLINGTON REDEVELOPMENT BOARD

Arlington, Massachusetts
Middlesex, ss

DOCKET NO. 3519

DECISION
Special Permit under
ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN REVIEW

Applicant: Housing Corporation of Arlington
Property Address: 19R Park Ave. Arlington

Date of Hearing: November 7, 2016

Continued to: December 5, 2016

Date of Decision: December 5, 2016

Twenty Day Appeal Period passed on December 24. No Appeals were made.

Date of Filing December 6, 2016

Members
Approved

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David M. West".

Opposed

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Janice J. Weber".

Janice J. Weber
Town Clerk's Certification
ASSISTANT





TOWN OF ARLINGTON

MASSACHUSETTS 02476

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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

DECISION OF THE BOARD

EDR DOCKET # 3519

19 Rear Park Avenue

Housing Corporation of Arlington

December 5, 2016

This Decision applies to the Special Permit application filed by Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA) to build thirty-four (34) units of affordable housing at 19Rear Park Avenue. Multi-family residential development is allowed by Special Permit in the R-7 district according to Section 5.04, Table of Use Regulations, of the Arlington Zoning Bylaw. The application requested a reduction in the required parking with Transportation Demand Management, from forty-eight (48) to twenty-three (23) spaces, under Section 8.01(a)(3). Further, a special permit under section 11.06 Environmental Design Review is needed due to the project's location abutting the Minuteman Bikeway, and its size of six (6) or more housing units.

A public hearing was held on November 7 and continued to November 21 and December 5, 2016.

Materials submitted for consideration of this application:

- 19R Park Ave.: Buildings A & B, Arlington, MA, dated December 5, 2016
- Application for Special Permit in Accordance with Environmental Design Review Procedures, 19 R Park Avenue, dated 10-13-2016
- Impact statement of the Housing Corporation of Arlington Pursuant to Article 11, Section 11.06 and Statement addressing Special Permit Criteria Set out in Article 10, Section 10.11(a) of the Arlington Zoning Bylaw
- HCA's Transportation Demand Management Plan for Downing Square and 117 Broadway, submitted 11/17/2016
- Transportation Impact Report, 19R Park Avenue, Arlington, MA, November 2016, (Revised December, 2016), Prepared for: Housing Corporation of Arlington, Prepared by: BSC Group.
- Memo from Transportation Advisory Committee to Arlington Redevelopment Board, Subject: 19R Park Avenue Traffic Impact Study, dated November 21, 2016.
- Memo to Arlington Redevelopment Board from Sam Offei-Addo, PE, PTOE and Joanna Kavalaris, PE, PTOE of BSC Group, Re. Response to Comments by Arlington Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) 19R Park Avenue—Transportation Impact Report, dated December 1, 2016.
- Memo to Jennifer Raitt, Director of Planning and Community Development and Redevelopment Board members from Laura Wiener, Assistant Director of Planning, Re. Additional information and clarifications for 117 Broadway and 19 Rear Park Avenue, dated November 7, 2016.
- Memo to Arlington Redevelopment Board from Jennifer Raitt, Secretary Ex Officio, Subject: EDR Report, Docket #3519, 19 Rear Park Avenue, dated November 7, 2016

In order to grant this Special Permit, the following criteria must be met.

Section 10.11a-1 The uses requested are listed in the Table of Use Regulations as a Special Permit in the district for which application is made or is so designated elsewhere in this Bylaw.

An apartment building is an allowed use requiring a special permit in the R-7 Multi-family Zoning District. The Board finds that the proposal meets this standard.

Section 10.11a-2 The requested use is essential or desirable to the public convenience or welfare.

There is significant demand for all types of affordable housing in Arlington, including family housing and smaller units for single individuals of any age. HCA will develop thirty-four (34) units of varying sizes for rent to households earning at or below 60% of the area median income. The requested use is desirable to the public welfare. The Board finds that the proposal meets this standard.

Section 10.11a-3 The requested use will not create undue traffic congestion, or unduly impair pedestrian safety.

Access to the residential units at this location will occur from a driveway on Lowell Street. The bylaw requires forty-eight (48) parking spaces, but can be reduced to 25% by Special Permit. The Applicant is proposing twenty-three (23) parking spaces, less than one space per unit, utilizing Transportation Demand Management (TDM). This will reduce traffic congestion in and around the site. A TDM Plan was reviewed and approved by the Board. The Board finds this standard is met.

Section 10.11a-4 The requested use will not overload any public water, drainage or sewer system or any other municipal system to such an extent that the requested use or any developed use in the immediate area or in any other area of the Town will be unduly subjected to hazards affecting health, safety, or the general welfare.

Final drainage plans must be approved by the Town Engineer prior to issuance of a building permit. The Board finds this standard is met.

Section 10.11a-5 Any special regulations for the use, set forth in Article 11 are fulfilled.

EDR-1 Preservation of Landscape: The landscape shall be preserved in its natural state insofar as practicable, by minimizing tree and soil removal and any grade changes shall be in keeping with the general appearance of neighboring developed areas.

The present condition of the lot is deteriorated, overgrown, and covered with weeds and debris. Any environmental pollutants will be mitigated prior to development. A preliminary landscaping plan has been approved. The Board finds this standard is met.

EDR-2 Relation of the Building to the Environment: Proposed development shall be related harmoniously to the terrain and to the use, scale and architecture of the existing buildings in the vicinity that have functional or visible relationship to the proposed buildings. The Arlington Redevelopment Board may require a modification in massing so as to reduce the effect of shadows on the abutting property in an R-1 or R-2 district or on public open space.

The view of the building from the Bikeway is attractive and appears to maintain a number of mature trees. Because of the grade change between Park Avenue and the Bikeway, the density and height of the four-story structure will fit into the neighborhood. The smaller building that is located at the corner of Park Avenue and Lowell Street has been redesigned to blend into the neighborhood. The Board finds that the proposal meets this standard.

EDR-3 Open Space: All open space (landscaped and usable) shall be so designed as to add to the visual amenities of the vicinity by maximizing its visibility for persons passing by the site or overlooking it from nearby properties. The location and configuration of usable open space shall be so designed as to encourage social interaction, maximize its utility and facilitate maintenance.

The project covers 42% of the lot area, leaving more than half the lot as open space. The location of the main building, facing the Bikeway, is as much as 38' back from the Bikeway in some locations. The tenants of the property will have easy access to the Bikeway, which provides open space and recreational opportunities. In addition, the project will provide access to the Bikeway from Lowell Street, for all bike path users, including people with mobility impairments. The Board finds that the proposal meets this standard.

EDR-4 Circulation: With respect to vehicular and pedestrian and bicycle circulation, including entrances, ramps, walkways, drives, and parking, special attention shall be given to location and number of access points to the public streets (especially in relation to existing traffic controls and mass transit facilities), width of interior drives and access points, general interior circulation, separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, access to community facilities, and arrangement of vehicle parking and bicycle parking areas, including bicycle parking spaces required by Section 8.13 that are safe and convenient and, insofar as practicable, do not detract from the use and enjoyment of proposed buildings and structures and the neighboring properties.

Access to the site will be provided via a single driveway from Lowell Street. There will be a secondary access road from Park Avenue for emergency vehicles only, on a right of way owned by the abutter. An important feature of the plan is that it will promote non-vehicle transportation, by providing easy access to the Bikeway and indoor bike storage on the site. The plan includes a single driveway off Lowell Street for vehicle access and also provides a pedestrian walkway that connects from Lowell Street to the Bikeway. The Board finds that the proposal meets this standard.

EDR-5 Surface Water Drainage: Special attention shall be given to proper site surface drainage so that removal of surface waters will not adversely affect neighboring properties or the public storm drainage system. Available Best Management Practices for the site should be employed, and include site planning to minimize impervious surface and reduce clearing and re-grading. Best Management Practices may include erosion control and stormwater treatment by means of swales, filters, plantings, roof gardens, native vegetation, and leaching catchbasins. Stormwater should be treated at least minimally on the development site; that which cannot be handled on site shall be removed from all roofs, canopies, paved and pooling areas and carried away in an underground drainage system. Surface water in all paved areas shall be collected in intervals so that it will not obstruct the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic and will not create puddles in the paved areas.

In accordance with Section 10.11,b, the Board may require from any applicant, after consultation with the Director of Public Works, security satisfactory to the Board to insure the maintenance of all storm water facilities such as catch basins, leaching catch basins, detention basins, swales, etc. within the site. The Board may use funds provided by such security to conduct maintenance that the applicant fails to do.

The Board may adjust in its sole discretion the amount and type of financial security such that it is satisfied that the amount is sufficient to provide for any future maintenance needs.

The Town Engineer will need to approve a plan for surface water drainage. The project also will need a permit from the Conservation Commission due to its proximity to the No Name Brook.

EDR-6 Utilities Service: Electric, telephone, cable, TV, and other such lines of equipment shall be underground. The proposed method of sanitary sewage disposal and solid waste disposal from all buildings shall be indicated.

All utilities will be installed underground. The Board finds that the proposal meets this standard.

EDR-7 Advertising Features: The size, location, design, color, texture, lighting and materials of all permanent signs and outdoor advertising structures or features shall not detract from the use and enjoyment of proposed buildings and structures and the surrounding properties.

No signs are anticipated. The Board finds that the proposal meets this standard.

EDR-8 Special Features: Exposed storage areas, exposed machinery installations, service areas, truck loading areas, utility buildings and structures, and similar accessory areas and structures shall be subject to such setbacks, screen plantings or other screening methods as shall reasonably be required to prevent their being incongruous with the existing or contemplated environment and the surrounding properties.

Trash and recycling facilities will be indoors. A lighting plan will be reviewed and approved by the Board prior to issuance of a Building Permit. The Board finds that the proposal meets this standard.

EDR-9 Safety: With respect to personal safety, all open and enclosed spaces shall be designed to facilitate building evacuation and maximize accessibility by fire, police and other emergency personnel and equipment. Insofar as practicable, all exterior spaces and interior public and semi-public spaces shall be so designed to minimize the fear and probability of personal harm or injury by increasing the potential surveillance by neighboring residents and passersby of any accident or attempted criminal act.

The project provides access for fire trucks and other safety equipment. The Board finds that the proposal meets this standard.

EDR-10 Heritage: With respect to Arlington's heritage, removal or disruption of historic, traditional, or significant uses, structures or architectural elements shall be minimized insofar as practical whether these exist on the site or on adjacent properties.

The property is listed on Arlington's Inventory of Historically and Architecturally Significant Buildings. There are no longer any buildings on this property as it is completely vacant. The Applicant has reviewed the Town Bylaw Article 6 to determine if there are any requirements. The Applicant has also conferred with the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer regarding any historic nature of the property. There do not appear to be any concerns with the plan as submitted in regard to historic preservation. The Board finds that the proposal meets this standard.

EDR-11 Microclimate: With respect to the localized climatic characteristics of a given area, any development which proposes new structures, new hard surface, ground coverage or the installation of machinery which emits heat, vapor or fumes shall endeavor to minimize insofar as practicable, any adverse impacts on light, air and water resources or on noise and temperature levels of the immediate environment.

The materials and mechanical equipment will minimize noise, as stated by the Applicant. The Board finds that the proposal meets this standard.

EDR-12 Sustainable Building and Site Design: Projects are encouraged to incorporate best practices related to sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, and indoor environmental quality. Applicants must submit a current Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) checklist, appropriate to the type of development, annotated with narrative description that indicates how the LEED performance objectives will be incorporated into the project.

The project scores in the highest category for LEED Neighborhood Development. It is in a Smart Location based on its proximity to transit, existing infrastructure, and shopping and recreational opportunities. The buildings will be very energy efficient. The Board finds this standard is met.

Section 10.11a-6 The requested use will not impair the integrity or character of the district or adjoining districts, nor be detrimental to the health, morals, or welfare.

Affordable housing is a desired use for the Town. The lot is in poor condition and will benefit from this development. The Board finds that the proposal meets the criterion.

Section 10.11a-7 The requested use will not, by its addition to a neighborhood, cause an excess of that particular use that could be detrimental to the character of said neighborhood.

Although located across the street from 20 Westminster Ave, a recently-permitted affordable housing development by HCA, the need for affordable housing is so extreme in Arlington that these two projects together will not result in an excess of this use. The Housing Production Plan incorporated 19R Park Ave and 117 Broadway developments into the housing pipeline to meet housing needs and demand. Many more affordable housing units are needed to meet local need and market demand. The project will be a positive addition to the area, and will provide customers for the nearby Arlington Heights business district. The Board finds that the proposal meets this criterion.

General Conditions

1. The final plans and specifications for the site, including all buildings, signs, exterior lighting, landscaping, bike parking locations and types of rack, and sidewalk materials and dimensions shall be subject to the approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board prior to issuance of a Building Permit. The Board shall review and approve samples of exterior materials. Final plans and specifications shall include complete information concerning colors, materials, lighting and other features that comprise the details of the final design.
2. The Applicant shall provide a statement from the Town Engineer that all proposed utility services have adequate capacity to serve the development, and that proposed site drainage is adequate.
3. The Board maintains continuing jurisdiction over this permit and may, after a duly advertised public hearing, attach other conditions or modify these conditions as it deems appropriate in order to protect the public interest and welfare.
4. Snow removal from all parts of the site, including abutting sidewalks and the pedestrian walkway from the sidewalk to the Bikeway, shall be the responsibility of the owner and shall be accomplished in accordance with the Town bylaws.
5. All exterior trash and storage areas on the property, if any, shall be properly screened and maintained in accordance with Article 30 of the Bylaws of the Town of Arlington.
6. Trash shall be picked up only on weekdays and only between the hours of 7:00 am and 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday.
7. No final or permanent Certificate of Occupancy shall be issued on this project until the project is completed in its final form and all conditions within this permit have been met.
8. Upon the issuance of the Building Permit the Applicant shall file with the Building Inspector and the Department of Community Safety the names and telephone numbers of contact personnel who may be reached 24 hours each day during the construction period.

Special Conditions

1. Upon installation of landscaping materials and other site improvements, the Applicant shall remain responsible for such materials and shall replace and repair as necessary to remain in compliance with the approved site plan.
2. The Applicant shall show evidence of agreement with Zipcar or provide an alternative TDM method prior to issuance of a Final Certificate of Occupancy.
3. The Applicant shall continuously abide by the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan dated November 17, 2016, in keeping with Section 8.01(a)(3) of the Zoning Bylaw. Applicant shall conduct a survey of residents six months after the date of the Certificate of Occupancy, in order to determine a baseline mode split for the project (percentage of resident households using cars, bikes, transit or walking as their primary mode). The survey, which shall be provided to the Director of Planning and Community Development (hereinafter "the Director"), shall include questions to determine if additional resident households could be using alternatives to a car and impediments to increasing non-vehicle travel to the site. One year from the date of the first report and annually thereafter, a similar report based on survey data will be delivered to the Director. If vehicle usage is increased from the baseline report to an extent requiring reconsideration, owner shall work with the Director to reduce vehicle usage. Report to the Director shall include survey results, and the following additional information:
 - a. Number of households with one or more cars parked on the site.
 - b. Number of households with bikes on the site.
 - c. Incentives provided to households by the Applicant, and actual usage of incentives (i.e. how many bicycles are usually parked on-site, how many transit passes are purchased, and how much subsidy is provided)
 - d. If subsidies are being provided to resident households, how many and of what type.